

## Accepting the challenge: Top IV dominate Airmen

By Master Sgt. Jay Waldner  
821 SPTS/SC

Even before the match started, the Airmen flaunted their vitality and youth at the Airman vs. Top IV floor hockey challenge. But could it last?

You may not have realized this, but the Airmen were only playing with seven players total, while the Top IV team rotated its players out regularly.

It only took the Airmen five minutes and thirty seconds to draw first blood against the older and more "experienced" Top IV team. Airman Brent Olson gets the credit for the goal.

Within the next four minutes Airman Olson scored yet again with an assist from Airman Adam Ring. It was at that moment, the crowd began to think that the Top IV might just be in a little bit over their heads.

However, not wanting the first period to end scoreless, Master Sgt. George Nicolas stepped up, and with a deflection from Senior Airman Bryan Samuel's stick, laid one in to bring the score to Top IV one, Airmen two.

Still not satisfied, Master Sgt. Nicholas once again brought it home with a wrap-around shot to tie the game.

Not wanting to be outdone, and eager show his own troops he still had some life in him, Master Sgt. Mike Aiken

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Photos by 1st Lt. Jennifer Tribble

Top: Master Sgt. George Nicolas and Airman Brent Olson face off during the Airman vs. Top IV floor hockey match. Above: (from left) Tech Sgt. Nathan Zaleski, Master Sgt. Mike Landmann, Senior Airman Bryan Samuel and Senior Airman Kevin Klutz, commemorate the NCO victory with the presentation of the event's "trophy". Senior Airman Bryan Samuel accepted the prize on behalf of the Airmen. Left: Master Sgt. Mike Aiken tries to keep the puck away from Airman 1st Class Frank Lillich as he makes his way down the court.



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# Teets submits resignation

By Master Sgt. David Byron  
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON -- Peter B. Teets, acting secretary of the Air Force, announced his resignation March 18, to take effect March 25.

"I'm honored to have served the president, the secretary of defense and with the dedicated Airmen of America's Air Force and the men and women of the National Reconnaissance Office over the past three years," Mr. Teets said.

"I'm confident we've strengthened the world's greatest Air Force to continue providing air and space dominance for the 21st century, as well as built a lasting national security space strategy to leverage space for America's national security advantage."

He has served as the acting secretary since Jan. 18.

"Mr. Teets has led the Air Force through a critical transition period, and it has been my honor to serve with him," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper.

"During his tenure he has made every Airman his priority," General Jumper said. "His unrelenting resolve to adapt our air and space force, to counter new and resilient threats to our nation, has guaranteed America's Air Force remains the greatest in the world."

Mr. Teets submitted his letter of resignation voluntarily and leaves the Air Force to return to private life. He will also leave his other positions as undersecretary of the Air Force, Department of Defense executive agent for space and director of the NRO.

"Mr. Teets' visionary leadership with his dual responsibilities as the undersecretary of the Air Force and director of the National Reconnaissance Office has placed space capabilities in the hands of warriors for the first time," General Jumper said.

As undersecretary, Mr. Teets is heavily involved with the day-to-day decisions needed to run the Air Force. The position also holds a strong focus on space systems and policy.

In his role as the DOD executive agent for space, he develops, coordinates and integrates space systems plans and

programs, as well as, all major defense space acquisition programs.

"I know we're on the right path to make our national security space capabilities more efficient and more effective. As a nation, we're striving to improve our space and intelligence capabilities, our development processes and professional rigor," Mr. Teets said.

"We've come a long way in three years," he said. "If you examine how we've been able to pool our talents, collaborate across our stovepipe programs and create national-level policy initiatives and insights, it is pretty obvious to me that this is the result of national security space integration."

As the NRO director, Mr. Teets is responsible for all space-based reconnaissance and intelligence systems. In this role, he also manages the national reconnaissance program, reporting directly to the secretary of Defense and director of central intelligence.

"Space systems are unique assets. They provide global persistence, perspective and access unhindered by geographical or political boundaries," he said.

"Our space systems, whether integrated with airborne and surface sensors or acting alone over areas of high risk or denied access, provide critical surveillance and reconnaissance information to national decision makers and combatant commanders, he said. "These space capabilities enable the tremendous success that our joint warfighters achieved during combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and will continue to be a cornerstone for future success during conflict."

Before entering Air Force service as the undersecretary in 2001, Mr. Teets held several executive positions with Lockheed Martin Corp., including president and chief executive officer. Before joining Lockheed Martin in 1995, he was president of Martin Marietta Space Group. His career with Martin Marietta and the space industry dates back to 1963.

"Mr. Teets has built a lasting space strategy that truly enables the success of our joint warfighting team," General Jumper said. "The Air Force will remember him as an innovative leader and friend. He will always be an Airman."

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# Detachment 3 Deactivates Data Link Terminal

By 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jennifer Tribble  
821<sup>st</sup> Air Base Group Public Affairs

THULE AIR BASE, Greenland – Detachment 3, 22<sup>nd</sup> Space Operations Squadron, commemorated more than 28 years of operational service of the Thule Tracking Station Data Link Terminal during a first-ever terminal deactivation ceremony here March 18.

“This is the first of a series of major changes facing Detachment 3 in the coming years,” said Maj. Mike Hower,

Detachment 3 Commander.

Jared Murrell, Automated Remote Tracking Station Technician, and the youngest operator in the Air Force Satellite Control network, officially shut down the system’s power.

“Being in the spotlight isn’t something I am accustomed to, but it is great to be at the start of a brand new tradition,” said Mr. Murrell.

The mission of the Data Link Terminal was to provide a limited alternative communication resource for the

Air Force Satellite Control Network and other dedicated users using existing Satellite to Ground Link System uplink and downlink frequencies.

“It is humbling at times to think that I am operating equipment that is near twice my age, but its deactivation was due,” said Mr. Murrell. “The DLT has done much to support the AFSCN and would not be deactivated, were it not for newer technology to replace it.”

With the recommendation from the National Reconnaissance Office, Air Force Space Command ordered the deactivation of the terminal, which is one of only a few in the AFSCN. The tracking station at Thule AB is one of a total of eight sites in the AFSCN. The other dedicated data link terminal ground station antennas and equipment are located at Onizuka Air Force Station, Calif., Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., and New Boston Air Force Station, N.H.

Maintained and operated at Detachment 3, nicknamed “Pogo” within the AFSCN, the terminal averaged more than 600 satellite contacts annually and logged a total of more than 20,000 satellite supports in its nearly three decades of operation.

“The deactivation and removal of the DLT paves the way for the AFSCN Remote Block Change upgrade scheduled to start at Thule in 2009 which will replace all of our 1980’s era antenna equipment with state of the art electronics,” said Maj. Hower

Although the Data Link Terminal has been deactivated, the missions of the Thule Tracking station will continue to support AFSCN operations.

**Above left:** Jared Murrell, ARTS Technician, and the youngest operator at Det. 3, powers down the DLT at the Thule Tracking Station with help from Col. John S. Haven II, 821<sup>st</sup> Air Base Group Commander.

**Left:** From left to right—Saundra White, Harris Corporation Site Manager, Jared Murrell, Col John S. Haven II, and Maj. Mike Hower, Detachment 3, 22<sup>nd</sup> SOPS Commander, officially deactivated the Data Link Terminal at the Thule Tracking Station at a ceremony here March 18.



Photos by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jennifer Tribble

## 821st SPTS promotes three Airman to senior master sergeant

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas— The Air Force has selected 1,535 master sergeants for promotion to senior master sergeant.

The complete list is available on the Air Force Personnel Center Web site at <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/eprom/>.

The board, which convened here Jan. 31 to Feb. 18, considered 16,708 master sergeants for a 9.19 percent select rate.

“Since public law limits the number of personnel who may serve on active duty in the top two enlisted grades, promotion to senior master sergeant remains highly competitive,” said Chief Master Sgt. Dale Kenney, chief of the enlisted promotion and military testing branch here at AFPC. “The hard work of these 1,535 individuals has set them apart as a select group ready to enter the top three percent of the enlisted force.”

The average score for those selected was 663.46 with an average time in grade and time in service of 4.54 and 20.16 years respectively. The average score was based on the following point averages:

- 134.98 for enlisted performance reports;
- 33.48 for time in grade;
- 21.24 for time in service;
- 20.43 for decorations;
- 66.32 for Air Force supervisory examination;
- 387.01 for board score.

Those selected will be promoted to E-8 beginning in April.

At Thule, the 821st Support Squadron celebrated the promotion of three of its Airmen. Master Sgt. Waldner, Telecommunications Quality Assurance Evaluator, Master Sgt. Scott Kastner, Fuels Quality Assurance Evaluator and Master Sgt. Rogelio Saladrigas, Plans and Programs Quality Assurance Evaluator.

All three were notified of their selection to senior master sergeant in the traditional manner — a surprise visit by their commander.

For more information on the senior master sergeant list, contact the local military personnel flight.



Clockwise from top: Master Sgt. Jay Waldner opens his door to find his promotion to senior master sergeant, as well as Col John S. Haven II and Maj. “Jeep” Wedding, waiting outside. Master Sgt. Scott Kastner takes a break from his bowling game to pose with members of Team Thule after learning about his selection to senior master sergeant. Maj. Wedding reaches out to shake the gloved hand of Master Sgt. Rogelio Saladrigas and congratulate him on his promotion to senior master sergeant.

Photos by 1st Lt. Jennifer Tribble

## COMMANDER'S ACTION LINE

I've got a proposal. Perhaps we could get a digital clock and thermometer posted on the tower of the new hospital so that you could see it when you exited the dining facility. That would be neat!

Respectfully,  
Weather watcher

-----  
Dear weather watcher,

What a fantastic idea. Unfortunately, due to severe funding constraints, we cannot procure a large-scale digital thermometer at this time. We will keep your suggestion in mind as we near the end of the fiscal year. Also, remember that you can always check the latest weather information on the entryway television at the Dining Hall, which is tuned to Channel 6.

Col. John S. Haven II  
Commander, 821st Air Base Group

**If you have a comment or question for the Commander's Action Line, call ext. 3400 and leave a message!**

On the main road (Pituffik) from the hangars to the pier, I've twice had to stop suddenly while preparing to make a left-hand turn because an oncoming car assumed I was turning on down the road to Bldg. 708 rather than the entrance to the community center. Would it be possible to move both roads farther apart to eliminate confusion?

Respectfully,  
Diligent Driver

-----  
Dear Diligent Driver,

Thanks for driving defensively and watching out for others here at Thule! The road leading to Bldg. 708 and the entrance into the community center are rather close and can cause confusion when turning. Unfortunately, due to our current snow, we cannot change the entrance to the Community Center. However, your suggestion will be incorporated into the "lollipop placement plan" this fall, as we prepare Thule AB for winter. For now, it's important that all members of Team Thule remember to practice the rules of the road—observe all traffic signs and signals and drive defensively.

Col John S. Haven II  
Commander, 821st Air Base Group

## Military pay, allowances recognize troops' contributions

By Gerry J. Gilmore  
American Forces Press Service

3/18/2005 - WASHINGTON -- Since the Sept. 11 attacks, Defense Department leaders and U.S. legislators "have worked together to increase servicemembers' basic pay by more than 21 percent," a senior DOD official told House Armed Services Committee members March 16.

DOD officials remain "committed to taking care of servicemembers and their families through appropriate compensation while members are deployed and serving their country in dangerous locations around the world," said Charles S. Abell, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, before the military personnel subcommittee.

U.S. troops are slated for a 3.1 percent across-the-board pay raise this coming year, Mr. Abell said. Additionally, he said the department has met its goal of eliminating troops' average out-of-pocket

housing costs by 2005. In fact, he said military housing allowances are 41 percent greater than they were in 2001.

Troops serving in dangerous overseas locations receive various types of tax relief, depending upon rank and income, as well as additional compensation in view of their contributions in fighting and sustaining America's fight against terrorism, Mr. Abell said.

For example, eligible enlisted troops deployed to combat zones have their military pay exempted from federal income tax, he said. Besides their regular pay, these troops also receive \$225 monthly in danger pay and a \$250 monthly family separation allowance.

Mr. Abell said that troops deployed to overseas combat zones also receive hardship duty pay of \$100 a month and a \$105 monthly incidental expense allowance.

An accumulation of such added compensation typically amounts to more than \$700 a month for married servicemem-

bers and more than \$500 for the typical single troop during deployment, he said.

"These pays and allowances acknowledge the hardship and danger involved at these deployment locations, as well as the sacrifice associated with tours away from family," Mr. Abell said.

He said that troops who volunteer to extend their overseas tours of duty in combat zones like Afghanistan and Iraq also can receive an additional \$1,000 monthly in assignment incentive pay.

DOD officials also want to work with Congress, Mr. Abell said, to increase servicemembers' hardship duty pay. And the department is seeking to keep its special operations troops in uniform through an array of incentive packages, he said.

For example, Mr. Abell said officials "are offering bonuses of up to \$150,000 for highly skilled senior noncommissioned officers to serve an additional six years."



## “Skibird” touches down at Thule



Photo by 1st Lt. Jennifer Tribble

A 109th Air National Guard LC-130H “Skibird” arrived to Thule in late March. The unit, based out of Scotia, New York, provides worldwide airlift of personnel and equipment using C-130H and LC-130H aircraft and conduct ski operations on ice caps and polar ice fields in both the Arctic and Antarctic. While the unit’s primary responsibility is to re-supply polar scientific researchers, they also perform sustained search and rescue missions in the polar regions. The unit visit Thule last year in March to perform sea ice skiway construction training on North Star Bay. Thule supports the 109th by providing logistic support, such as transportation, billeting, and use of base supply and storage facilities. The 109th is the only Air Force unit that flies the ski equipped LC-130H aircraft.

## Thule celebrates newest First Term Airmen



From left: Lt Col Joseph Dennis, 821st Air Base Group Deputy Commander, Airman Kiarra Hymes, Airman 1st Class Marcus Chavis, Airman Hannah Feldmann, Airman Brian Bickhart, Airman 1st Class Cordarius Lewis, Amn Brent Olson, Airman Kenli Ortigoza, Airman Shaun Mueller, Airman 1st Class Frank Lillich (Class Leader), Airman 1st Class Kathryn Wilson, Airman 1st Class Caitlyn Hcott, Airman Joseph Pruitt, and Master Sgt. Scott Phipps, Thule First Term Airmen’s Center NCOIC. The graduating class was the largest at Thule since the Air Force started the FTAC program.

# Thule vehicle safety is everyone's business

By Tech Sgt. Dave Franklin  
821st Air Base Group Safety Office

Thule certainly is a unique assignment in a very harsh and austere Arctic environment. That environment requires each of us to remain vigilant and aware of our surroundings — especially when driving a government vehicle.

The vehicle damage in the picture doesn't appear to be that bad, and fortunately no one was injured. Believe it or not, the cost of the repair for this vehicle's preventable damage was \$1500.00.

This is \$1500.00 that could have gone to a repair or improvement of our mission capabilities here at Thule.

The operator left the pickup parked in an area where a front end loader was clearing snow. The loader operator was unaware of the unattended parked pickup behind him and struck it while backing up.

Several simple measures can be taken to prevent this type of mishap from happening to you.

- Never park behind another vehicle.
- When backing always use a spotter. Even when you have a clear view why take a chance? Most vehicles backing up have passengers who can serve as a spotter until the vehicle is clear.
- Be a true friend, get out and help spot the vehicle while it's backing up.

- Before getting into your vehicle check behind it for stationary objects or other vehicles.
- Ensure all of your vehicle windows are clear of ice and snow that can obstruct your view.

If you're behind the wheel, or simply a passenger in a vehicle here, take a few extra moments to assess the possibility of vehicle damage before hitting the road.

A few minutes of safety can make all the difference!



Courtesy Photo

Vehicle damage seen here cost Thule and the Air Force \$1500 to repair. Situation awareness and safety techniques can prevent this from happening to you.

## ...Cont'd from Pg. 1

rose to the occasion and shot one into the net, pulling the Top IV ahead for the first time in the match.

However, while the Top IV was catching its breath, the Airmen took the opportunity to tie the game with a goal by Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Frank Lillich.

A mere 20 seconds later, Airman Olson again came from out of nowhere to pocket another goal, pulling the Airmen a step closer to victory.

Although the Airmen seemed unbeatable at this point, no game is without its controversies and that's when it happened — the goal by Staff Sgt. Dwain Henderson. Although it was contested, the shot ruled good...say no more.

Although, unable to sway the referees on the goal, Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lillich decided to take his superintendent down a notch while he had the chance, and tripped in front of Master Sgt. Aiken causing him to eat floor.

Leaving no room for controversy or post-game excuses, Master Sgt. Nicolas stepped-up again to score another goal and bring the Top IV ahead by one.

Putting the nail in the coffin, Staff Sgt. Jason Jeitler brought home the final goal finishing the Airmen.

The terrific display of athletic prowess and sportsmanlike conduct ended with the Top IV defeating the Airman with a score of six to four.



Photos by 1st Lt. Jennifer Tribble

Top: Airman, with the help of Airman Joseph Pruitt, Senior Airman Kevin Klutz defends the Airmen's goal from Master Sgt. George Nicolas and Staff Sgt. Dwain Henderson. Above: Airman Shaun Mueller tries to keep the puck away from Staff Sgt. Jason Jeitler and Tech Sgt. Nate Zaleski.



# Corps on top of the world supporting Arctic mission

By JoAnne Castagna, Ed.D.  
US Army Corps of Engineers

Up north near the Arctic circle, nestled between two mountains and surrounded by miles of ice bergs and glaciers stands Thule Air Base in Greenland, the United State's northernmost military installation.

In this remote area of the world you will also find U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel who volunteer to stay at the base, months at a time, to supervise new construction and renovation projects to keep the installation's mission fully operational.

Projects have included an aircraft runway and taxiways, a new living quarters, a fire fighting training facility and most recently a new medical center.

## Thule Air Base, Greenland

Greenland, a Province of Denmark, is the world's largest island, slightly more than three times the size of Texas. It sits 900 miles south of the North Pole between northeastern Canada and Europe.

Over 80 percent of the sparsely populated island is covered with flat and sloping icecaps and small glaciers. In the northwestern corner of Greenland, in a coastal valley, is Thule "Two Lee" Air Base - "Thule" is Latin for northernmost part of the inhabitable world.

The air base is home to hundreds of personnel, including active-duty Air Force members, and U.S., Danish, and Greenlandic contractors.

## New medical center

Earlier this winter, Thule Air Base unveiled its new state of the art structure, a single story, 1,900 square meter area medical center built by the Denmark-based firm GC/MTHojgaard under a design/build contract and supervised and quality assured by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District.

The base was in need of a new medical center because the old one was built 50-years ago, and was becoming expensive to operate; and was located far from current housing facilities of the main base population. "The new facility will save the U.S. Air Force a great deal of money in costly utility services," said Col. John S. Haven II, 821<sup>st</sup> Air Base Group Commander.

Besides saving the base money, the base's personnel, as well as residents of local West Greenland communities, will benefit by the new facility's services.

"Some of the new services the medical center provides that are unique to this region include outpatient care, inpatient and surgical services, mortuary facilities, and digital x-ray services that will provide

lower radiation dosages, a quicker product to doctors, and no adverse effects to the environment," said Capt. Cory Baker, 821<sup>st</sup> Support Squadron Medical Liaison Officer.

## Construction in an Arctic environment

"Construction at Thule is a great challenge. The weather is severe. The construction very unique, fast paced, and a lot of logistical challenges," said Joseph "Jerry" Valade, Team Leader, USACE, Ft. Drum Resident Office, New York District.

Valade is familiar with the working conditions at Thule because he has worked on various construction projects at the base, both as a military officer and civilian employee for the last 20 years, sometimes working on the installation for months at a time.

Valade was the on-site manager for the new medical center and worked with other on-site Corps engineers including Sudha Brown from the Corps' Europe District and Sterret Daniels from New York District. Construction of the center took place from May 2003 to October 2004 only during the summer and fall months. "There is a limited exterior construction season, between June and mid-September, because Thule is above the Arctic Circle."

*Cont'd on Pg. 9...*



Photo courtesy of USACE Resident Office

The new Thule Air Base medical center officially opened Nov. 23. The new hospital, which replaces the original facility built in 1953, offers in-patient services and updated medical technology to include digital radiology, ultrasound and a state-of-the-art humidity-controlled environment to more than 800 Americans, Danes, Greenlanders and Canadians who work at the Department of Defense's northern-most military installation. In addition to the services offered to Thule AB personnel, people in local West Greenland communities are also able to receive medical attention at the new facility. The 821st Air Base Group operates and maintains Thule Air Base in support of missile warning, space surveillance and satellite command and control missions.



### ...*"Hospital"* - Cont'd from Pg. 8

"They have 24 hours of sunlight from June through August and 24 hours of darkness from November through February," said Valade. "During the summer period high temperatures are in the mid 50 degree range. During the winter season they experience storms and the weather is too severe to work outdoors."

It was during the warmer summer months that the team was able to receive their construction materials. During the summer, Greenland's frozen shipping lanes can be broken up to allow supply ships in. The island is locked in by ice nine months out of the year.

The materials they used to build the new facility included pre-insulated metal panels for the underside of the flooring, walls, and roof and a composite gypsum and a metal decking system for the interior floors.

Due to the harsh Arctic environment, the medical center had to be constructed differently than a typical building. Two-thirds of the northern portion of Greenland, where Thule is located, is covered with 6-12 feet of permafrost, permanently frozen ground at variable depths below the earth's surface.

"Due to the presence of permafrost most structures in Thule are elevated and this includes elevating the medical center," said Valade. "If buildings are not constructed off of the ground or have air corridors separating the buildings from the ground, the heat from inside the buildings can melt the permafrost and the buildings can sink."

"Overseas projects can be very challenging, allowing you to experience different cultures, visit various parts of the world that other people only dream of, and most importantly, broaden your construction skills and experience," said Valade.

"As the on-site manager I had to be self-motivated and learn how to make fast decisions and work independently," he added. "The satisfaction of completing a project under severe climatic conditions in such a remote area of the world is a project engineers dream."

The construction work on the medical center was performed in collaboration with a team of other agencies.

"The working relationship between the agencies was very good. Due to many challenges including Thule's limited logistics, severe weather, unique construction activities and short construction season construction issues had to be resolved quickly," Valade added. "All of the agencies involved expedited resolutions of issues to keep the construction project moving on schedule."

"We appreciated the Corp of Engineer staff member on site who provided constant oversight of the construction," said Haven. "The partnership produced a great finished product that we, at Thule, are extremely proud of."

For additional information about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's military construction program, contact author Dr. JoAnne Castagna at email: [Joanne.castagna@usace.army.mil](mailto:Joanne.castagna@usace.army.mil)

Dr. JoAnne Castagna is a technical writer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District.

## Snapshot!

*Practice makes perfect*

**Condor Crest exercises Thule's response**



Top: Senior Airman Carolena Prior and Staff Sgt. Jason Jeitler make their way to the scene of a hostage rescue during an exercise scenario here Mar. 15. Above: Members of the Thule Air Base fire department rescue a victim of smoke inhalation, Capt. James Allman, from the bakery during a fire exercise here Mar. 17. Members of Team Thule participated in the 21st Space Wing's Condor Crest exercise Mar. 10—17.

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# The Lighter Side of Thule



The crowd goes wild....Members of Team Thule watch the action at the Airmen vs. Top IV challenge



How you doin'? Never fails, there's always one...or two....in every bunch...



Master Sgt. Curtis Green gets a little not-so-friendly with Thule's newest Airmen, testing their reflexes with a coin challenge at the TOW Club following the Airmen's appreciation dinner.

Yea Baby Yea! Tech Sgt. Digati says, "Give me angry...that's it...now give me pouty..."



Decision, decisions...Tech Sgt. Nathan Zaleski does a little casual shopping in the BX just before the hostage crisis exercise

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awarded a medal?  
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about it.  
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call 5678.

## Thule Times Editorial Staff

Col. John Haven II, 821st Air Base Group Commander  
1st Lt. Jennifer Tribble, chief, public affairs  
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